

REFERENCE USE ONLY

History of Woodbridge Township

Adapted from
Leon McElroy's Materials



APPROVED BY THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION
WILLIAMSON, N.J.
GEORGE FREDERICKSON, S.S.
WOODBRIDGE, N.J. 07095

WOODBIDGE HIGH SCHOOL
1955

THIS BOOK IS THE PROPERTY OF

The Town of Woodbridge

Book No. 721

THE PUPIL to whom this book is loaned will be held responsible for its careful use, and its return in good condition.

IT MUST NOT be defaced, and, if injured or lost, must be paid for by the pupil.

PERMISSION must be obtained from the teacher before taking it from the school-room.

Book No. 721

Cost

DATE LOANED	PUPIL'S NAME
	Anthony Tyler

J. L. Hammett Company, Publishers

Introduction

This History of Woodbridge Township, prepared by some of the personnel of the educational staff of Woodbridge High School, will be a most valuable addition to the course of study offerings in the social science curriculum.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to those whose names appear in the Foreword who were responsible for the preparation of this history.

May returns in a greater civic pride and a deeper respect for the traditions of the Township of Woodbridge bring each person who contributed to this history a partial reward for his contribution.

VICTOR C. NICKLAS

Superintendent of Schools

Woodbridge, New Jersey

August 15, 1955

Foreword

This History of Woodbridge Township is condensed from the writings of Mr. Leon E. McElroy, who considerately permitted this adaptation from his "Woodbridge in the 19th Century," for use with the social science classes at Woodbridge High School.

We are very appreciative of this generous demonstration of civic-mindedness on the part of Mr. McElroy, who has allowed us to quote verbatim from his manuscript.

Grateful acknowledgment is made also to Miss Alida van Slyke, head of the English Department, who read the abstraction and made valuable suggestions concerning the nature and contents of the material, and to Mr. James Brown of the Social Science Department, who adapted the manuscript for classroom purposes.

JOHN P. LOZO, Principal

MARTHA J. MORROW, Head
Social Science Department

History of Woodbridge

The Township of Woodbridge is the oldest original Township in the State of New Jersey. It was settled in the early autumn of 1665 and was granted a charter by King Charles of England on June 1, 1669. The charter, after describing the boundaries of the settlement, provided that the "township called by the name of Woodbridge shall consist of at least 60 families and as many more as they shall think fit"; "that the freeholders or a majority of them have power to choose their own magistrates and justices of the peace and their military officers." The freeholders were also given power "by the plurality of voices to choose their own ministers" and being so chosen all persons should contribute toward their maintenance, in addition to which two hundred acres of upland and meadow were allocated for the use of a minister. Provisions were also made for one hundred acres more for the maintenance of a free school. All lands so chartered were exempt from taxes. The charter further provided that "notwithstanding it shall and may be lawful for any one of the said freeholders and inhabitants aforesaid that are of a judgment in matter of religions to maintain any other minister at their own cost and charges without being molested or disturbed for the same." The township was also given power to erect and ordain its own courts for the trial of civil and criminal matters; no person was to be deprived of his right to a trial by jury. 1

In matters of religion and the worship of God, the charter provided "there is liberty of conscience granted to all persons as well as to the freeholders and to all others that are or shall be admitted inhabitants within the said corporation or township they taking or subscribing to the oath of allegiance to the king, and fidelity to the lords proprietors." The charter provides for an allowance of free trade with restrictions against the imposition of a customs tax unless levied by the Governor, Council, and General Assembly; that in case of invasion or insurrection the inhabitants will join with other towns in the province for the defense and safety of the same; that the inhabitants will elect two deputies to the General Assembly for the making of laws; that in case any one of the inhabitants has a desire to remove and transplant himself to any other place, he has liberty so to do and to dispose of his estates and land to his best advantage. This then was one of the earliest bills of rights granted in the Province of New Jersey which one of New Jersey's historians rightfully refers to as "one of the most liberal ever given in America." 2

The original boundaries of Woodbridge comprised the communities we now know as Carteret, Rahway, New Dover, Oak Tree, Bonhamtown, Metuchen, Milton, Avenel, Colonia, Iselin, Menlo Park, Fords, Hopelawn, Keasbey, Sewaren, Port Reading, the eastern part of Raritan Township, and Woodbridge proper.

In the main, the original settlers came from England by way of Massachusetts and Long Island. In the closing months of the summer of 1665, Philip Carteret, having been appointed Governor of New Jersey, settled at Elizabethtown, which he made the seat of his government. He dispatched agents into New England for the purpose of inviting immigrants to settle in the province. Many accepted the invitation, and several persons came from Newbury, Mass., to settle in Woodbridge. Of these immigrants from Newbury, some returned while others remained and became distinguished both in civil and military life. Among those who remained were Captain John Pike, the ancestor of General Zebulon M. Pike, who was killed in Canada in 1812; Thomas Bloomfield, the ancestor of Joseph Bloomfield, for twelve years the Governor of New Jersey; John Bishop, Sr.; John Bishop, Jr.; Jonathan Haynes, Henry Jaques, Stephen Kent, Abraham Tappan, Elisha Ilsley (Inslee), Samuel Morre, John Ilsley (Inslee), and others.

Dally in his history of Woodbridge records that it was so called in honor of Rev. John Woodbridge of Newbury, Mass.. This reference, which is probably in error, was accepted by Dally from the historian of Newbury. The Rev. Woodbridge is never recorded as having been in New Jersey and is known to have spent much time in England. The emigrants to Woodbridge were Puritans who were naturally strict adherents of the customs in force in the New England Colony of Massachusetts, where the General Court at an early date disposed of the matter of naming towns by ordering the naming of English towns in New England. Most often the settlers requested permission to use the name of a place where some of them had lived in England.

Many of the early settlers of Woodbridge came from Suffolk County, England, about 68 miles northeast of London and in the vicinity of Ipswich. Located about eight miles from Ipswich is the market town of Woodbridge in the parliamentary division of Suffolk, England. History records that Thomas Bloomfield came from Woodbridge, England, to Woodbridge, New Jersey, by way of Newbury, Mass. He acquired in 1665 from the Lords Proprietors a large tract of land. Tradition has it that Thomas Bloomfield sailed up Papiack Creek with his family and debarked at a point located between the road to Sewaren and the road to Port Reading. He is known to have possessed a nine acre meadow on the west side of the creek near the upland called Bloomfield's Landing.

Thus it can be accepted that because of the Puritan tradition as exemplified by the Massachusetts General Court, Woodbridge derived its name from its English namesake.

The story of Woodbridge in the 19th century can well parallel the advancement made in the progress of our infant nation; not that it was by virtue of such advancement destined to greatness, but that it kept pace with the times even though the contributions of its citizens were meager. From its very beginning in 1665, its residents rallied to the call of constituted authority to repel the invasions of any infractions of the liberties of its people or the country; so we find Woodbridge

always represented in the armed forces from the time of the "undeclared war" on France at Tripoli to the present day.

SLAVERY

Slavery probably existed in Woodbridge Township shortly after its settlement. The early records reveal that land was allotted to fifty-seven of the original settlers in acreage ranging from 15 acres to 512 acres a person. Most of this land was devoted to farming pursuits requiring help in the fields, even in those days referred to as plantations. In addition, domestic help in the homes was needed.

There is to be found in the "Concessions and Agreement" of the Land Proprietors, Berkley and Carteret, 1664, a mention of slaves as a basis for the allotment of land to their owners; Woodbridge came under that agreement. There were also to be found redemptioners of many classes and kinds who were sold on arrival by ship at Perth Amboy and whose purchase price was used to pay their passages. Until they had worked out their passage money redemptioners served as slaves under the Proprietors. By 1738 the number of slaves in New Jersey was 3,981.

During the last quarter of the 18th century the agitation for the abolition of slavery took root in New Jersey. As early as 1696 the Quakers recommended that their members cease from further importation of slaves.

What may be said to be the first anti-slavery meeting ever held in the United States was held in Woodbridge on the 4th of July, 1783, seven years after the Declaration of Independence and six years before George Washington was inaugurated as President of the United States. This meeting was held on the farm of Moses Bloomfield, a surgeon in the Continental Army, located north of Freeman Street where Barron Avenue runs through Prospect. Great preparations were made for the event which had been freely advertised in the neighboring communities. An ox was roasted whole, and a vast crowd assembled to listen to the orator of the day, Dr. Bloomfield. At the appointed time, Dr. Bloomfield mounted the platform, followed by his slaves, fourteen in number, who took their places on each side of him, while he addressed the multitude on the evil of slavery. At the close of the speech, Dr. Bloomfield turned to his slaves, stating that, inasmuch as we as a nation had declared that all men had a right to freedom, he could not consistently undo the principles of the Declaration of Independence by holding slaves. He ended his speech with the announcement, "From this day they are free." Tradition has it that each of the slaves freed that day continued to labor for the venerable doctor but for adequate compensation.

New Jersey, in 1818, had attempted by legislation to curb the traffic in slaves, but despite this law the "underground railroad" had opened in New Jersey without fanfare. It was not until the passage of the Federal "Fugitive Slave Law" of 1850, which brought slavery to the front as an important issue, that the "underground" was seriously

considered. This law provided that United States Commissioners could surrender a colored man or woman to anyone who claimed the negro as a slave; that the negro could not give testimony; "commanded" citizens to aid the slave hunters somewhat as a sheriff's posse would search for an escaped murderer; and sought to destroy the underground railroad by prescribing a fine and punishment for those who harbored runaway slaves or prevented their recapture. Philadelphia seemed to be the center for escaping negroes. At this point converged a number of routes leading to Quaker farm houses along the Maryland border. From there, across the Delaware River into New Jersey, the slaves were sent under the care of trusted agents, whose most active supporters were Quakers. Once across the river, the slave was sent on his journey at night, generally to Canada, resting by day in barns, cellars, and in the woods. When the sun went down, the slave emerged and started across New Jersey by different marked routes. The principal route, known as "Number 1", passed through Woodbridge Township.

When the New Jersey Constitution of 1844 was adopted, it was thought that slavery had at last been abolished; but the State Courts had ruled that the relationship of master and slave existed by law when the Constitution of 1844 was adopted and that the Constitution did not destroy that relationship; neither did it abolish slavery nor did it affect the laws in relation thereto existing at the time of its adoption. The immediate effect of this decision led to the enactment of a law approved April 6, 1846, declaring slavery as such was abolished, but the old slaves were held to service.

IMMIGRATION

When Perth Amboy was settled, it was the hope of the proprietors that it would be developed as the principal seaport or port of entry in the colonies. It made a proud bid with New York for the honor. In the early days of settlement it teemed with shipping activity. Strange as it may seem to the observer of today, the Port of Perth Amboy welcomed thousands of immigrants from Scotland, Ulster, England, and Germany during the period from 1682 until immediately before the War of 1812, numbered among whom were many "redemptioners." These persons, having no money with which to pay their passage and anxious to reach America, sold their services for a term of years. In New Jersey, redemptioners, when their term of service was out, were usually given 50 acres of land to cultivate in their own right and, thereafter, became free citizens.

Many of the immigrants who arrived in 1837, settled in this vicinity. It was during the period in 1854 that the Irish and German element settled in Perth Amboy, Woodbridge Township, and Rahway. These hardy people contributed much to the advancement of their communities. The majority of those settling in this vicinity were employed in the clay mines and in the brick factories of Woodbridge Township.

Immigration to this country was periodic and in spurts. Probably the last great exodus from the British Isles to the United States was in 1873. In this year many more immigrants chose the Township for their residence.

It was not until 1896, however, that the other countries of Europe, especially those of Poland, Austria-Hungary, and Italy began to arrive on our shores in large numbers. Many Hungarians settled in the Township of Woodbridge during this period finding employment in the extensive clay mines and the many brick factories. A great number of these Hungarian immigrants had served in the army of their country before their arrival in America. It was not uncommon for the residents of Woodbridge around the turn of the century to witness them arriving wearing the familiar military boots, the short jacket, and the hat with the feather.

TRANSPORTATION

Prior to 1800, the only roads used for travel through the township were King George's Highway leading from the Raritan River at New Brunswick through Bonhamtown; the Sand Hills and Fords to Amboy Avenue at Main Street; a road from Perth Amboy now known as Amboy Avenue and St. Georges Avenue, to Newark, referred to in the early part of the 19th century as the back or country road to Elizabethtown; a road extending westerly from Rahway Avenue, now Green Street, commonly referred to as the road to Uniontown (Iselin); a road beginning at the mouth of the Papiack (Woodbridge) Creek northwesterly through Sewaren and Port Reading to the Blazing Star Road near Rahway, now known as part of West Avenue; and the Old Road in Sewaren and Blair Road in Port Reading.

The Township of Woodbridge, situated then as now, was in a direct line between Philadelphia and New York. Travel by road prior to 1800 was arduous, long and tedious. As travel and trade increased between these two important centers, the demand for improved roads became more insistent; and finally the argument that "every person ought to contribute to the roads in proportion to the use he makes or the benefit he derives from them" found favor in New Jersey, and the toll or turnpike era began. Between 1801 and the coming of the railroad era in 1830, many turnpike roads were chartered. An estimated 550 miles of this type road were laid. In resorting to the pike road, the settlers here were only bringing into existence an institution developed earlier in England.

No road in the early days of the 19th century was safe for the drivers of the mail coach or its passengers. This vicinity was no exception to the rule. On February 1, 1819, at three in the morning outside of Rahway on the turnpike road to Elizabethtown, The U. S. Mail Coach was stopped by three masked and armed men. Two of them seized the horses by their heads, while the third pressed a pistol to the driver's breast and ordered him off his box, threatening to kill him in case of resistance. Cutting the traces to loose the horses one

of the robbers placed himself at the door of the coach menacing the life of the six passengers by demanding and obtaining their money and valuables. On completing this, they ransacked the mail and selected such packages as they chose and made off. Following the report of the robbery, the postmaster at New York offered a reward of \$1,000 for their apprehension and conviction. Several days later, two of the robbers were caught in New York. A week later the third member, a Frenchman who had served in Napoleon's army, was arrested at Lancaster, Pa. All three were tried in April, 1819, at Trenton, convicted, and sentenced to ten years at hard labor. A similar robbery took place several years later in August, 1826, at the Essex and Metuchen Turnpike near Metuchen.

On February 28, 1827, the Legislature of Maryland chartered the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, America's pioneer railroad and the oldest in the United States in the point of continuous service. In that same year, efforts were made in the New Jersey Legislature to permit the operation of railroads. Petitions were presented to the Legislature for railroads from Trenton to New Brunswick; from Camden to Amboy; from Easton to Elizabethport; and from Trenton to Easton. Efforts had also been made to permit the construction of a canal between the Delaware and Raritan Rivers. On November 6, 1827, James Parker of Middlesex County presented a report to the Assembly recommending its construction by the State and introduced a bill to that effect. The canal bill was passed, but the railroad bill was not. The canal bill, however, was defeated in the Council.

Those interested in the Camden-Amboy project, however, came right back at the legislative sessions in November, 1828, with another petition from the inhabitants of the State; and on January 17, 1829, the bill was reprinted in the Assembly, read a second time, and was engrossed on January 29. When a vote for passage was taken on February 13, the bill was again defeated in the Assembly. On February 17, a vote was taken on the canal bill, which passed the Assembly. On January 7, 1830, a bill to establish the Camden-Amboy Railroad was again introduced in the Assembly, which body on January 28 finally passed it. The canal bill passed in the Assembly on the same day. Both bills were sent to the Council where on February 4, 1830, they were both passed. And so the first railroad and canal in the State of New Jersey were projected.

In March, 1832, the railroad that was to serve this part of Middlesex County was established and until 1870 was to be known as "The New Jersey Railroad and Transportation Company." One of its original incorporators was William Edgar of Woodbridge Township. The incorporators were authorized to lay out, construct, and improve a railroad not exceeding 66 feet in width, with as many sets of tracks as deemed necessary: from a convenient point in the City of New Brunswick through or near the villages of Rahway and Woodbridge and within one mile of the market house in Elizabethtown; through Newark by the most practical route; and thence over the bridge cross-

ing the Hackensack and Passaic Rivers to some convenient point not less than 50 feet from high water mark at Jersey City. This is over the present route of the Pennsylvania Railroad from New Brunswick to Jersey City.

On December 5, 1835, the N. J. R. R. & T. Company was opened to Elizabethtown by a trial run from Jersey City with the locomotive "Newark" and four passenger cars containing stockholders of the company and the township committee of Newark, numbering one hundred. The trip on this train was made from Jersey City to Newark at the rate of one mile in three minutes and from Newark to Elizabethtown in fifteen minutes. Regular train service to Elizabethtown was inaugurated on December 21, 1835. The fare between that place and Jersey City was twenty-five cents.

On July 7, 1836, the N. J. R. R. & T. Company was completed to the east bank of the Raritan River directly opposite the city of New Brunswick. On that day a trial run of thirteen cars attached to the locomotive "New Brunswick" was made. The directors and invited guests were received by the Common Council of New Brunswick and elegantly entertained. The Common Council and a large number of citizens of New Brunswick then accompanied the directors to Newark where the greatest cordiality and good feeling prevailed. An address had been delivered at New Brunswick by Cornelius Hardenburgh, to which reply was made by General Darcy, the president of the company. Following the custom of the company, a hundred or more ladies of New Brunswick, at the invitation of the directors, enjoyed an excursion to Newark on Saturday, July 10. General train service between East Brunswick and New York was inaugurated on July 11, 1836. On July 30, 1836, many people traveled over the road from New York, Newark, and Elizabethtown to New Brunswick to attend the Rutgers commencement.

In 1854, the Central Railroad of New Jersey had experimented with an engine converted from the woodburning type to that of coal for generating steam. This experiment proved so successful that on February 24, 1855, the locomotive "Phoenix" of the N. J. R. R. & T. Company, which arranged to burn coal, staged a trial run from Jersey City to Elizabeth with one passenger coach. The experiment proved successful, so changes were contemplated to convert all engines on the line from woodburners to coalburners.

It was in the Legislature of 1855 that Senator Ralph C. Stults of Middlesex introduced a bill to incorporate the Perth Amboy and Woodbridge Railroad Company. Two prior attempts to extend a railroad from Rahway to Perth Amboy had ended in failure. The branch we know today in Woodbridge was finally conceived on March 9, 1855, when the State Senate passed a bill to incorporate the railroad. The attempts to construct the road met with setbacks, for it was not until October, 1864, that the railroad was finally opened for traffic.

Aid from the N. J. R. R. & T. Company had been promised, provided a right of way could be obtained. This was finally agreed upon after

some haggling. In the late summer of 1860, a plea was made for an additional \$5,000 stock subscription when the N. J. R. R. & T. Company agreed to go ahead with construction.

In 1861, an application was made for a new railroad from Perth Amboy to Elizabethport. A bill, which was introduced in the Assembly February 26, granted a charter to the Middlesex and Union R. R. Company. It was said that this railroad was advocated by the Camden and Amboy because it would extend their road from South Amboy to the Hudson River. New Jersey R. R. & T. opposed it because it would be in direct competition with the Perth Amboy and Woodbridge R. R. which that company had agreed to construct. The bill passed both houses of the Legislature. It was the intention, according to the talk of the day, that this railroad would be a river road and run along the shore and over the meadows adjacent to Staten Island Sound to Elizabethport. This road was to be begun within three years from January 1, 1862, and to be completed and in operation within ten years of that date.

In 1871, the Camden & Amboy and all the smaller railroads in the State controlled by them together with the Delaware & Raritan Canal and the Philadelphia & Trenton Railroad Company with all their interests, were leased to the Pennsylvania Railroad for nine hundred and ninety-nine years. The N. J. R. R. & T. Company passed into the hands of the Pennsylvania system on February 27, 1867, which with the earlier consolidation of the capital stock of the Camden & Amboy and the Philadelphia & Trenton, led to a new company called the United New Jersey Railroad and Canal Company. These three companies, together with the Philadelphia-Trenton Railroad, on June 30, 1871, executed to the Pennsylvania Railroad Company a nine hundred and ninety-nine year lease which lease was validated March 27, 1873. In this manner began the history of the Pennsylvania Railroad in New Jersey.

On March 6, 1882, a public meeting was held in Masonic Hall for the purpose of discussing a new depot for Woodbridge. The original and then existing depot, built in 1873, was a small one with the platform constructed high above the level of the ground so that passengers could step from the car platform to the station platform. A prior request for this improvement had been made to the railroad and had been answered by Frank Thompson for the Pennsylvania to the effect that the application had been received and would be given early consideration. The procrastination of the railroad led to the appointment at this meeting of a committee to wait on the railroad officials. This was followed by the arrival of a special train in April with railroad officials to make a personal inspection of the depot, followed by a letter saying that "if the people of Woodbridge will procure a deed for additional ground required at the present station, the railroad company will accept it and give the people of Woodbridge a station and grounds to their entire satisfaction." Thus the people of Woodbridge in 1882 desiring a suitable station building donated additional ground

to provide landscaped approaches from the Green and Pearl Street sides. It was not until 1885 that the actual construction of the new depot was begun; by April the foundation was completed. The new depot, which was constructed of brick, was opened to the public in August, 1885, when Charles Numbers, the ticket agent, moved into the living quarters over the depot. The station, which was erected on the west side of the railroad, was demolished in 1939 when the grade crossings in Woodbridge were eliminated.

In 1872 the Central Railroad was opened between Newark and Elizabeth. Almost a year later the grading between Elizabethport and Perth Amboy was nearly complete, and the track was being laid between East Rahway and Woodbridge (Sewaren). In July, 1873, John T. Johnston on behalf of the Central Railroad of New Jersey purchased the stock of the Perth Amboy and Elizabethport Railroad.

The first station built along the route of the Perth Amboy and Elizabethport Railroad was at Sewaren, the contract for the building of the depot and freight house having been awarded in November, 1874. The work, started in the same month, was to cost \$6,500. The station was to be "something unique and perfect."

In August, 1890, after vainly endeavoring to secure better terminal facilities from other roads over which the Reading was obliged to send its coal and freight to New York, President McLeod of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad determined that the Reading should have its own freight and coal terminal in the vicinity of New York. It was reported that the site chosen was in Perth Amboy. It was also reported that the new terminal would be connected with Bound Brook by a branch railroad. A total of 2,500,000 tons of coal was expected to be handled yearly. But while Perth Amboy expected to have the new terminal Mr. McLeod and William Hunter, chief engineer of the Philadelphia and Reading system, selected Port Reading as the site and authorized the purchase of the property. The task of buying the necessary property was given to Charles A. Klink, a representative of the real estate department of the Philadelphia and Reading, who, in the delicate task of quietly buying up the many little tracts of land comprising the property, posed as a farmer. He was so successful in this character that the entire tract of over 300 acres was acquired at farm rates before anyone had suspected his purpose. Work from Bound Brook had progressed so far that by July, 1892, the work of grading had reached the "cut" between St. George's Avenue and the Pennsylvania Railroad bridge between Avenel and Edgar. The track had been laid to the docks at Port Reading in September, 1892, when the first shipments of coal were received. From year to year the business increased enormously over the one pier in operation; in order to facilitate all business offered, the management decided to build another pier and provide storage for one thousand additional cars. This work was completed on January 20, 1897.

WATER TRANSPORTATION

Many of our enterprising citizens carried on a freight and passenger service to New York out of Woodbridge Creek. We find James Paton of Woodbridge offering in March, 1805, to sell his sloop "Mary and Isabella" of 32 tons burden and suitable for river or coastal trade. This sloop, incidentally, is one of the vessels believed to have navigated Woodbridge Creek and Heard's Brook to the bridge on Rahway Avenue, where James Paton maintained a store on the southwest corner of Rahway Avenue and Green Street.

In the early days of the steamboat, as in the case of locomotives, steam was generated by wood fires. In cases where it was necessary to maintain an even headway, especially in heavy seas or against a swift running tide, the pressure in the boilers was too great, with the result that fires, explosions and bursting pipes caused much injury and damage.

By a law passed March 7, 1844, the Township Committee was authorized to raise by tax, or otherwise, a sufficient sum to be expended under its direction in building a dock or wharf at the ancient public landing place on Staten Island Sound, near the mouth of Woodbridge, formerly Papiack Creek "on the northeasterly side thereof, to extend a sufficient distance to accommodate such vessels and steamboats as usually navigated the same." The ancient landing place was at the mouth of Woodbridge Creek, on the location of the Shell Oil plant. Before and after the passage of the 1844 law, difficulty in opening an old road to that point eventually led to an abandonment of that site for a dock built at the foot of the currently known Ferry Street in Sewaren, known as Steamboat Dock.

In 1850 the "Thomas Hunt" operated out of Perth Amboy, leaving that city at 7:45 A. M. daily. This steamboat is believed to have been the first steamboat to use the facilities of the Steamboat Dock. The fare from that point to New York was twenty-five cents. Because of the unpleasant experiences the passengers underwent in reaching New York in December of 1858 and in the early part of 1859, due to the ice and fog, agitation was started for the early completion of the Perth Amboy and Woodbridge Railroad. Invariably during this period the steamboats would get caught either in ice jams or fogs in the trips up the Sound, resulting in much discomfort and delay to passengers. In 1859, the steamboat "Iolas" running between Keyport and New York stopped at Sewaren for passengers and freight to and from New York. The passenger fee was twenty cents. There were many other steamboats plying among the New York, New Brunswick, Perth Amboy and Keyport harbors.

The era of the steamboat passenger traffic, however, faded with the advent of the 20th century so far as the port of call at Sewaren was concerned; thereafter, such transportation was in the form of excursion boats which touched at Boynton Beach.

EDUCATION

Education was recognized from the date of the Township's existence. The Charter of 1669 provided for the laying out of one hundred acres for the maintenance of a free school and for the erection of a school house to be forever exempted from taxation. Up to 1862 no attempt had been made to lay out or utilize the land. This neglect ultimately encouraged the location of "squatters" whose evident intent was eventually to claim it. Drastic action had to be enforced to prosecute all persons who refused to quit these lands. Means were taken for their future security when in 1701 a division of the common land was publicly discussed, prior to ordering the free school lands to be laid out. The actual division of lands, however, was not made until June, 1707, when the school lands were laid out as a "common field" to be planted with corn. In 1714, at a special meeting of the Freeholders, a committee of four was appointed to take "special care" of the school land, and a gift of two acres near Richard Skinner's, at Rahway, was made for the building of a school house at that place. In 1715 a resurvey was directed to be made of the school lands, which by the original survey of 1701 had been located at Iselin and for the past few years known as the Poor House Farm.

As the original settlers were Puritans, it is assumed that, following the custom of that sect in the colony of Massachusetts, the original school was maintained in connection with the church in the Meeting House.

The first school teacher in Woodbridge was James Fullerton who was elected to the position at a town meeting held March 3, 1689. It is probable that he taught at the Woodbridge school until sometime in 1691, when an offer was extended to John Beacher to teach on trial for six months and "until nine o'clock at night." Beacher was succeeded by John Brown of Perth Amboy who probably taught the Woodbridge children until 1695, when a tax was ordered levied to make up his salary, which was in arrears. Whether Mr. Brown continued his vocation or not under such circumstances is open to conjecture, but it is assumed that he sought more fertile fields and that between 1695 and 1711, the children were without benefit of schooling. The next teacher on record is George Eubanks, who was engaged in 1711, and probably was the first teacher to ply his vocation in the famous Strawberry Hill school house which is supposed to have been built around 1701 and which was located in the vicinity of Amboy Avenue and Bunn's Lane.

The management of the school land was given from year to year into the hands of committees appointed at the annual Town Meeting; but for want of authority to settle the accounts properly, or to prosecute persons committing waste and trespassing on the school lands, or to build a school house, or to make provision for the maintenance of proper teachers, application had to be made in 1769 for a charter regulating the affairs of the trustees. Such a charter was obtained and signed by William Franklin, Governor of the Province of New Jersey, at Burlington on June 24, 1769, wherein John Moores, Nathaniel Heard, Moses

Bloomfield, Benjamin Thornall, Ebenezer Foster, Joseph Shotwell and Robert Clarkson, then acting as trustees through appointment at Town Meetings, were constituted the first trustees under the charter as a body politic under the name of "The Trustees of the Free Schools of the Town of Woodbridge."

At the Town Meeting of 1766, the question of applying the interest of the school fund for the "schooling of the poor people's children" was voted down; but in 1789, the Town Meeting authorized the use of the interest and from that year to 1824 directed the Collectors of Taxes to "pay to the President of the school land the dog tax to be expended for the schooling of poor children." In the Town Meeting of 1825, the receipt of dog taxes was directed to the payment of damage caused by sheep.

Before 1800, New Jersey was classified among the sixteen States forming the Union as depending upon church schools for the schooling of poor children. An act to incorporate societies for the promotion of learning was passed in New Jersey in 1794. In the year preceding, subscriptions were obtained to build the Woodbridge Academy. Much of the timber for this school was donated by the Trustees of the Free School Lands. It was built and completed in May, 1794. The site occupied by this school was on the west side of Rahway Avenue and almost directly across from the building formerly owned by the Barrons, the Boyntons and now by Dr. Rothfuss.

It was on the site of the Inn of Henry Potter on Rahway Avenue that, on April 17, 1826, the Woodbridge Seminary or Elm Tree Institute, was opened. All the preparatory branches of science necessary for the farmer, mechanic, merchant, doctor, lawyer, or divinity student were embraced by the course of instruction. Latin, Greek, Hebrew, English, French and Spanish were taught, as well as arithmetic embracing bookkeeping, algebra, trigonometry and geometry with practical application to surveying. Chemistry, botany and history were offered. This school had an elaborate library, spacious lodging rooms, and a large campus in the rear of the building for recreation.

In 1817, a law was passed by the State Legislature which provided for the creation of a fund for the support of free schools. In 1820 the townships of the State were, for the first time, authorized to raise money for school purposes by vote of the town meeting for "such poor children as are paupers belonging to said township and the children of such poor parents, resident in said township, as are or shall be, in the judgment of said committee, unable to pay for schooling the same." In 1827 it was estimated that \$50 was necessary to defray the expense of tuition of eight poor children in the township.

By an act to establish public schools passed April 17, 1846, provision was made for the appointment of a State superintendent of schools and for the election at town meetings of a town superintendent who was, on and before the second Monday in May, 1846, to "set off and divide the township into convenient school districts" with power

to alter and change as circumstances required. The pay of the local superintendent was to be one dollar a day. He, together with the trustees of each school district, was to select the text books to be used. The first superintendent of schools in Woodbridge was Jacob B. Clarke, of Rahway.

The School Act of 1846 provided that school districts might be incorporated by adopting a name and a seal and causing the boundaries to be recorded in the office of the county clerk. When incorporated they could raise by a two-thirds vote any district taxes they might desire for maintaining the school, purchasing land, or building school houses. The first district to take advantage of this law was School District No. 1 which was incorporated April 19, 1852, under the name of "The Colombian School." The section of the township now known as Colonia caused its School District No. 3 to be incorporated April 22, 1854, as "Washington School." The school district at Fords, covering the territory from Fords to Bonhamtown and from Fords to the Perth Amboy line, was incorporated March 15, 1858, as the "Fairfield Union School." On January 5, 1859, School Districts 11 and 12 in the northwest section of the township were incorporated as the "Oak Tree School." The uptown school district of Woodbridge, however, was not incorporated until May 24, 1860, when it was designated "Jefferson School District." The Iselin or "Uniontown School District" was incorporated April 6, 1861. The "Washington School District" No. 13, formerly No. 3, was re-incorporated April 4, 1864. "Star School District" No. 2, for the Carteret, Port Reading and Sewaren district, was incorporated in 1865.

In 1854, the Township of Woodbridge had seventeen School Districts attended by 1,173 children between 5 and 18 years old out of a total of 1,748 eligible between those ages. Nineteen teachers were employed, of which 12 were male and 7 female. The salary paid a male teacher per annum was \$375; female teachers received \$180 per annum.

Late in 1861, the old Fairfield School at Fords was destroyed by fire. This school, which was immediately replaced by a much larger structure on the same site, was re-opened on May 27, 1862. The new building which measured 45 by 30 feet was made of wood. It could be divided into two rooms separated by glass doors. This building withstood the test of time. It was removed some years ago to a site across King George's Road, not far from the original site, to make room for the new modern school now known as School No. 7 at the corner of King George's Road and Hoy Avenue.

The Jefferson School in Woodbridge opened on March 12, 1866. The fact that the school was forced to close before the conclusion of the school year was cause for calling a meeting which was held May 14, 1867, to raise money sufficient to carry on until then. At this meeting but six taxpayers appeared; they voted to raise \$500. It was also made known at this meeting that 105 pupils were too many for one teacher to handle, so it was voted to employ an assistant. The Jefferson School was located on the south side of Main Street on what is now Columbus

Avenue. It was moved after the erection of No. 1 School to the corner of Main and Pearl Streets where it was used for commercial purposes. Later it was moved to a location opposite the Memorial Building.

On July 9, 1875, the Jefferson and Academy School Districts were consolidated at a meeting held in the Masonic Hall preparatory to the erection of a new modern grade school. It was originally planned to erect the new school in the vicinity of Masonic Hall on the "square" near the Pike House, but the final site chosen was that of the present School No. 1, then known as Brown Street. On April 20, 1876, ground was broken for the building, and excavating commenced for the foundation. The plans for the building called for a style of architecture resembling modern Italian in brick two stories high with six rooms on each floor surmounted by a tower with a bell and town clock. The cost of the building was estimated to be \$25,000. The bell weighed 1,500 pounds. Inscribed upon the outside was the following: "School District No. 24, AD 1776. C. W. Boynton, President; Howard Valentine, D. C.; William H. Berry and Charles Campbell, Trustees." "Wisdom is better than gold." The placing of the bell was an invitation to the mischievous youth of Woodbridge to ring the bell at unseemly hours. On October 30, 1876, the tower was adorned with a spire supporting a gilt weather vane seven feet in length with the cardinal points of the compass below in large gilt letters. On November 8, 1876, a large clock from the factory of E. Howard & Company, of New York, was put in running order. The works of this clock, which cost \$600, were placed 35 feet from the dials which were six feet in length and which prevented the works from being affected by the shaking of the tower when the bell was being rung. The striking apparatus of the clock was operated through a hammer which struck upon the outside of the bell.

Dedication exercises for the new school building were held on January 20, 1877. When the school officially opened two days later, over 400 pupils were in attendance.

In 1877, Woodbridge had seven schools in the township with a total attendance of 1,278 pupils of which 794 were enrolled at Public School No. 1. The other schools were at Locust Grove, Six Roads, Rahway Neck, Blazing Star, Uniontown, and Fairfield Union.

At the school election held March 21, 1899, an appropriation of \$14,000 was requested; and the voters were asked to vote an appropriation of \$5,000 for a new brick school house at Port Reading, the Sewaren Improvement Company having agreed to donate to the Board of Education a plot 100 feet square for the building.

The number of schools in the township for the next sixteen years remained the same. In 1894 the school laws abolished the old form of school district in charge of three trustees for the present form in which all of the schools in the township function as a unit under nine members of a Board of Education.

In May, 1895, the late Mr. John Love was appointed principal of School No. 1, his term to commence with the opening of school in Sep-

tember. In 1900 he was made the first supervising principal of schools in the township.

What we know now as the High School had its beginning in No. 1 School with a small group of students. What can be called the first graduating class from Woodbridge High School completed a three-year course about 1881 with the following pupils being given a certificate of graduation: Sidney Pearson, Sadie Brewster, Clara Melick and Lulu Bloodgood.

A new high school was not commenced until 1910.

WARS

The War of 1812 is not one which appeals to the enthusiasm of one which arouses undue patriotism. Probably one of the most outstanding figures in this war was Zebulon Montgomery Pike, who was born near Trenton, February 5, 1779, but who spent his boyhood in Woodbridge, the place of his ancestors. He was the son of Col. Zebulon Pike, one of the local residents who had distinguished himself in the Revolutionary War. At the age of 21, he was a first lieutenant in the army. When President Jefferson sent Lewis and Clark to the Northwest, he sent Zebulon Pike to the Southwest. Their reports laid the foundation for the great migration across the Mississippi and the unfolding of all the mighty empire of the West. While on his mission to the Southwest in 1806, he was credited with the discovery of "Pike's Peak" in Colorado. In 1812 he was stationed on the frontier and in the following year was made a brigadier general. He was killed at York, capital of upper Canada, on April 27, 1813, by the explosion of a mine in which several lives were lost. Just before he died, General Pike gave his sword to his aide, Col. Donald Frazer. This sword was offered to the New Jersey Historical Society in November, 1903, by a resident of Georgia.

Another illustrious son of Woodbridge was Joseph Bloomfield. He was born in the old Bloomfield homestead off Freeman Street near the corner of Barron Avenue in 1753. When the Revolutionary War broke out, he was studying law but joined in the cause of the colonists and was commissioned a captain and later a major. He fought in the battles of Monmouth and Brandywine. After the war, he resumed the study of law and acquired a successful practice in Burlington, N. J. The Assembly and Council elected him governor annually from 1801 to 1812, except in 1802 when there was a tie vote and the president of the Council administered the affairs of the State. No governor of New Jersey has occupied the exalted position of governor for the length of time Bloomfield did. The city of Bloomfield in Essex County was named after him on October 13, 1796. He died at Burlington on October 3, 1823.

It was not until 1815 that the subject of the War of 1812 was taken up in Woodbridge. As a matter of fact, no mention was made of war in the annual town meeting held April 12, 1813. It was necessary to call a special town meeting on May 24, 1813, to take measures for the defense "of our national rights pursuant to an extraordinary meeting

of the Township Committee on the 13th instant at which the Township Committee was ordered to call this meeting to take into consideration means of defense against the common enemy." This meeting was held at the Inn of James Jackson where it was voted that seven hundred dollars be raised by assessment "for the defense of this town against the enemy."

On December 24, 1814, the treaty of peace ending the War of 1812 was signed at Ghent; but the news was not received in Woodbridge until February 20, 1815, when cause for rejoicing was made by firing a gun salute, the tolling of church bells, and the assembling of the town folk in church.

The Civil War had begun with the surrender of Fort Sumter on April 14, 1861. When the news reached Woodbridge, loyalty to the cause of the North was made by a display of flags at the private residences throughout the community. On April 15, 1861, President Lincoln made his first call for 75,000 volunteers. In Woodbridge, twenty young men of the Pike's Guards left for war on August 26, 1861, in answer to the President's first call. The number was much larger than Woodbridge's quota.

The members of the Pike Guard joined with the members of the Clark Guard of Rahway and, on August 23, 1861, were mustered into the Federal service at Trenton as Company "H" of the 5th New Jersey Volunteer Infantry for a period of three years.

During its term of service in the cause of the Union, Company "H" of the 5th N. J. V. took part in thirty-two battles, the most important of which were the siege of Yorktown, Va.; Williamsburg, Va.; Fredericksburg, Va., and Gettysburg, Pa.

Under the call of President Lincoln for nine-month volunteers, issued in September, 1862, a company composed almost entirely of Woodbridge Township men was organized and was to be known as Company "F," 28th (Middlesex) Regiment of New Jersey Volunteer Infantry. This company was recruited by Isaac Inslee, who was later appointed captain of the unit. During the whole time the 28th New Jersey Volunteer was associated with the army of the Potomac, it held a position in the immediate front, at all times fighting gallantly and suffering many casualties.

The Civil War ended with the surrender of General Lee at Appomattox on April 9, 1865; and the news to Woodbridge, as well as to the rest of the country, was cause for general rejoicing. The church bells were rung at 6 P. M. and fireworks were displayed in the evening.

The next week Lincoln died. On receipt of this news, all the public places in Woodbridge were draped in mourning, and flags were lowered to half mast. The train bearing the remains of Lincoln passed through Rahway on April 24 enroute to New York City where the people turned out in great numbers to pay tribute. The train stopped at the Rahway station for a few minutes, so some got a view of the casket through the windows of the car.

CLAY AND BRICK

Woodbridge is universally known for its fine clay deposits and its by-product, brick.

One of the early settlers, John French, a dealer in bricks who was elected a freeholder, was granted 15 acres of land in 1670 on condition that he furnish Woodbridge men with bricks in preference to all others. That Woodbridge did have brick makers in their midst in the early settlement is verified by a reference to the "Molden Men's Lots" which were located in Green Street somewhere near the home of the late Peter Leahy. It is probable that these lots were given to induce them to remain in Woodbridge to ply their trade. It is reasonable to suppose that they made bricks from clay found to the south of Green Street, now the route of State Highway No. 35.

In 1800 most of the brick to be had in this country were imported from England. In that year common red brick, which was selling for \$8 per thousand in New York City, was difficult to get. Many years later rich kaolin beds were discovered in Woodbridge and Perth Amboy.

In 1820, John E. Noe and Benjamin M. Noe offered for sale their farm consisting of 88 acres "situated on the turnpike leading from New York to Philadelphia by way of Staten Island adjoining New Blazing Star Ferry and the Sound" where "there is plenty of clay for making brick." In the same year 105 acres of land in the Port Reading and Sewaren section of the Township were offered for sale.

In 1825, the old Salamander Works was established by Gage Inslee and Rene Pardussus on the site presently occupied by the Woodbridge Lumber Company on Rahway Avenue. It early made stone ware and fire brick, and was one of the most noted stoneware potteries of that time in the eastern part of the State. It made three types of Rochingham Pitchers, still in existence.

Clay was shipped from Woodbridge to Boston in 1816, but the real value of the clay beds of Woodbridge was not developed until after the Civil War.

In 1859, it was said that material for nearly 80,000,000 fire bricks was at that time being sent annually into the market from Woodbridge, Perth Amboy, and South Amboy. This clay also supplied all the alum works in the county. About 2,000 tons a year were used for that purpose.

In 1845, William H. Berry, a native of Maine, having an eye for business, saw great possibilities in clay. He associated himself with P. H. Lane, of New York, and purchased property near Hawks Nest Landing, at the foot of Berry Street. He erected a plant there for the manufacture of fire brick. After the withdrawal of Lane in 1846, Alexander Brown and James Valentine became associated with this company. The excellency of the Berry brick was established all over the country. In 1876, facilities were available for making 1,000,000 bricks a year. In addition to the manufacture of brick, many thousands of tons of clay were exported by rail and water from Berry's Dock on Woodbridge Creek.

In the autumn of 1866, the plant of Boynton and Company was in operation at the mouth of the Woodbridge Creek, presently occupied by the Shell Oil Company at Sewaren. Mr. Boynton, a native of Bangor, Me., came to Woodbridge in the spring of 1866 to manufacture drain pipe and land tile in association with his father and another businessman. Mr. Boynton was the first maker of hollow tile in this vicinity. It was used chiefly in conjunction with iron rafters in the construction of fireproof buildings. Mr. Boynton also manufactured a fireproof shingle with which many of the buildings in downtown New York were roofed. His trade was confined principally to the eastern States, but some of his brick and tile were used in and around the capitol grounds at Washington.

In 1866 M. D. Valentine and James R. Valentine commenced business on the present site of the M. D. Valentine and Brothers Company plant near Spa Spring in the manufacture of lath brick, for which J. R. Valentine had been granted a patent the previous year. This brick was to be manufactured in scouring pipe, tile, and brick. By 1876 the plant had grown to such proportions that it was capable of making 4,000,000 of these bricks in a year. Since its inception, this plant which has grown to establish an enviable reputation in the manufacture of fire brick, is known all over the world.

From 1887 to 1895, "The Florida Grove Company" in Fords; "The Carteret Brick Works," "The Anness and Lyle Manufacturing Company," Perth Amboy; "The Stewart Ceramics Company," "M. D. Valentine and Brothers Company," and the "Standwell Fireproofing Company," all had been organized to mine clay and manufacture brick and tile.

MILLS

Because of limited transportation facilities at the beginning of the 19th Century, it was necessary for the residents of any given area to be provided with their needs by those who produced them. The farmers, who numbered many, provided those in the villages with meat, milk, and vegetables for daily sustenance; but the wheat and rye which the farmer also produced had to go to the mills to be ground for the making of bread. Many farmers also maintained tan yards for the treatment of skins to be used for leather. Saw mills had to be maintained to furnish the material needed in the construction of homes and in the manufacture of furniture. From the earliest days of its settlement, the Township of Woodbridge had been provided with grist mills as well as fulling mills. As Woodbridge expanded, the number of these mills increased.

Woodbridge boasted of having a copper mine within its original borders at Uniontown, now Menlo Park, which was worked before the War of 1812 by Thomas Edison. The ruins of this old mine which is still visible are located on Mutton Hollow Road, which is the dividing line between Woodbridge and Raritan Township, between the road to Oak Tree and the Lincoln Highway.

FISHERIES

In the early days of settlement, the waters of Raritan Bay, Raritan River, the Sound, Woodbridge Creek, and the Rahway River abounded with fish of all kinds. Oysters, clams and other crustacea were to be had at all seasons. The fame of Perth Amboy oysters was recognized as early as the middle of the 1750's. By the beginning of the 19th Century, New York fishermen came by schooner to the Sound and Raritan Bay to fish in competition with the fishermen of Middlesex County. These encroachments grew to such alarming proportions that at the annual town meeting held at Woodbridge, April, 1820, it was unanimously voted to raise \$100 by tax for the defense and support of the ancient rights and privileges to the oyster grounds in New Jersey. In September, 1829, the oyster beds in New Jersey off Perth Amboy were pillaged by two or three hundred oystermen from Staten Island. The planting of oysters near the mouth of the Raritan Bay had been permitted by law, and \$12,000 had been spent in developing the beds; but the New Jersey oystermen were not sufficient in number to hold off the descending horde so were forced to surrender. This resulted in the indictment by the Middlesex Grand Jury of 30 of those who were recognized as taking part in the affair. Demand was made by the Governor of New Jersey upon the Governor of New York for their delivery to New Jersey. The matter was eventually adjusted by the enactment of laws to protect the industry at Perth Amboy which continued thereafter to raise oysters for domestic and export use. Seven hundred barrels are reported as having been shipped from Perth Amboy in one day in October, 1878, for export to England. In 1894, however, the oyster trade began to decline in Perth Amboy; and in November, 1899, a boat load of Perth Amboy oysters was turned down in the New York market as being of inferior quality. They were considered inferior to the 1898 crop which had been bad enough but just good enough to find a market.

POLITICS

On February 17, 1860, the Legislature passed a supplement to an act to create the County of Union and thereby cut loose from the Township of Woodbridge and the County of Middlesex that part of Rahway known as lower Rahway in which Leesville was located and, in addition, that part of Rahway called Milton.

In the early part of 1906, considerable interest was manifested in the northeast section of the Township in withdrawing in favor of the establishment of a borough. This was first made evident when at its meeting of February 20, 1906, the Township Committee received a communication from the Board of Education on a bill introduced in the Legislature to incorporate a portion of the township as the Borough of Roosevelt. A resolution adopted by the Township Committee will serve to give some idea of the circumstances. It reads as follows:

"Whereas, Carteret has had at the expense of the Township as a whole its just proportion of the improvements and is about to set itself off in a borough that will increase the tax rate of the portion left which

is unjust to the taxpayers of the outlying districts who have had no improvements and have borne uncomplainingly their portion of the expenses to improve said borough and the other portions of our town . . . therefore, be it resolved that we the Township Committee of the Township of Woodbridge, the body representing the taxpayers of said Township, take some formal action against the bill now pending in the Senate for the protection of whom we represent." In accordance with this resolution, the chairman of the Township Committee appointed a committee to appear before the Senate Committee to protest against passage of the bill; and if the bill were to be passed, to request that a provision be included whereby the new borough assume its just and proportionate share of the township indebtedness.

The act to incorporate the Borough of Roosevelt, which was approved April 11, 1906, was to take effect if a majority of the inhabitants to be affected by the change approved by their votes. The date of the election was set for May 1st. The results of this election showed that 381 inhabitants of the Carteret area voted, that three ballots were rejected, and that 377 voted in favor of the borough and one against the change.

INNS AND COACHES

Probably no two institutions were so closely allied in the early days of our settlement as the inn or tavern and the stage coach. One of the first taverns set up in the Province of East Jersey was that of Samuel Moore at Woodbridge in 1683, although the Proprietors in 1668 ordered "in consideration for the inconveniences that do arise for the want of an ordinary in every town" a tavern in Woodbridge for the relief and entertainment of strangers. Moore's Tavern, according to Dally, occupied the site upon which Dr. Samuel E. Freeman's drug store stood in 1873, which would fix the location at the corner of Green Street and Rahway Avenue on a lot now vacant but in the occupancy of George Lucas.

A mail system, the first established in the country, was devised by Colonel John Hamilton of New Jersey, afterwards Governor in 1694. This system was reported to and adopted by the British government. In 1729 the mail passed once a week between New York and Philadelphia in summer and once in every two weeks in winter. This schedule was continued until 1754, a period of twenty-five years. From 1754 the mail system was rapidly improved; and in 1764, under Dr. Franklin's superintendence, James Parker, Comptroller and a native of Woodbridge, under a heading "For the benefit of Trade and Commerce," gave notice that a postrider with the mail would leave New York at 1 P. M. for Philadelphia and until further orders would leave each city every alternate day "if weather permits." In this manner the trip between the two cities was accomplished every twenty-four hours. The plan of transporting the mails was in canvas bags and on the backs of horses. The express rider, as he was termed, changed horses about every twenty-five miles. There were in 1791, seven post-offices in this State at Newark, Elizabethtown, Bridgetown, New Brunswick, Princeton and

Trenton. The Woodbridge post office was established in 1791, with John Manning as postmaster and Cross Keys Inn as the location.

When the opening shots at Lexington started the Revolutionary War, a courier was dispatched southward by the Massachusetts authorities. It took him four days to reach New York. A fuller account was relayed on the same route two days later by a rider leaving New Haven, Conn., on April 24, at 9:30 A. M. and arriving in New York on Tuesday at 2 P. M. The dispatch rider started across New Jersey arriving at Elizabethtown at 7 P. M. and at Woodbridge at 10 P. M., reaching New Brunswick at midnight. He was at Princeton at 3:30 A. M. and in Trenton three hours later.

When George Washington left Mount Vernon for New York to take the oath of office as the first President of the United States, he left Philadelphia on the morning of April 21, 1789, arrived at Trenton that afternoon, and that same night journeyed to Princeton, where he spent the night. Accompanied by Governor William Livingston, Washington (on the 22nd) proceeded to Woodbridge where he spent the night at the Cross Keys Tavern, then located on the northwest corner of Amboy Avenue and Main Street on the site presently occupied by the Knights of Columbus. This famous old building still stands, having been moved to a new location to the rear of the original site on the north side of James Street. On the morning of April 23, Washington left for New York by way of Rahway and Elizabethtown.

Prior to 1800, several taverns dotted the main roads in the Township, the oldest of which is believed to be Cross Keys. Built before the Revolution, it was situated on the main post and stage road between Philadelphia and New York. It was first maintained as a hostelry by William Manning and was the scene of all public events in the village, being used as the place of the Town Meeting from 1824 to 1848. In this same house General Lafayette was entertained in 1824.

Almost as famous was the tavern conducted by Thomas, James, and Charles Jackson on the road to Rahway and Blazing Star (Carteret). This tavern, which was known as the Elm Tree Tavern, was located on the west side of the road to Rahway, now known as Rahway Avenue, a part of which is still standing at No. 531, a few feet north of Grove Avenue. This inn was also the spot chosen by the inhabitants for the holding of the town meetings from 1800 to 1803, 1810 to 1820 under the Jacksons, and from 1821 to 1823 under Henry Potter. An ancient elm which stood in front of the old tavern was cut down in February, 1837. The trunk, which was hollow, measured 32 feet in circumference and accommodated 15 men, who stood upright within it.

Probably the best known tavern in the Township, besides the Cross Keys Inn, was the famous Pike House, so called because the turnpike roads to Rahway and Blazing Star (Carteret) passed its front door at the southwest corner of the road (now Green Street) to Uniontown. In 1848 when the Cross Keys Inn ceased to operate as a tavern, the Town Meetings previously held there were transferred to the Pike House

where this annual meeting was to continue to 1874. In the 1920's the old Pike House, which was known in its later years as the Woodbridge Hotel, was demolished. The site is now occupied by a gas station.

Probably one of the last hotels to be built in the Township during the nineteenth century was the Sewaren Hotel which was erected about 1878 to accommodate the people from the city who for years made Sewaren their annual vacation spot. The hotel continued to be operated as a summer retreat until about 1913 and then was forced "to give up the ghost." It was demolished shortly thereafter.

BRIDGES

At a town meeting held September 22, 1669, a good, serviceable, stout bridge was ordered to be constructed over Papiack Creek below the "Meeting-house Green." This was the first bridge ordered built in the settlement. It was for the convenience of the many early settlers who lived on the upland along the Sound.

It was not until 1850 before a bridge was built over the creek connecting what is now Sewaren with the village of Woodbridge.

POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS

As we approach the nineteenth century, we find the following villages scattered throughout the Township designated Blazing Star or Rahway Neck, now Carteret; Leesville, Bridgetown, Milton, Lower Rahway, now Rahway in Union County; Pleasant Mills, now in the Inman Avenue section; Uniontown, or Perrytown, now Iselin; Metuchen, Bonhamtown, Sand Hills, Florida Grove, now Keasbey, and Woodbridge.

The law which brought Lower Rahway into the County of Union went into effect on the second Monday in April, 1860. The last meeting of the Township Committee of Woodbridge at Rahway was held at the Mansion House on April 16, 1860, where (in the past) it had often met to transact business and settle accounts.

On March 16, 1870, the Legislature passed an "Act to establish a new township in the County of Middlesex, to be called the Township of Raritan." Thus Raritan Township was made up from a part of Piscataway and that part of Woodbridge now called Metuchen.

The last piece taken from Woodbridge was in 1906, when the Borough of Roosevelt was created by the Legislature. Thus, in 241 years of its existence, in the face of the many attempts made consistently to cut it up, it gave up outer slices to Perth Amboy, to Union County, to Raritan Township, and finally to the Borough of Roosevelt.

NEWSPAPERS

James Parker, who was born at Woodbridge in 1714—another illustrious son of Woodbridge—established the first permanent printing house in New Jersey at Woodbridge in 1751. He was a business associate of Benjamin Franklin. In 1758 he established and printed at

Woodbridge "The New American Magazine," the first periodical of its kind edited and published in the colony and the second magazine of its kind on the continent.

When the Stamp Act was passed in 1765, Parker issued and published from his Woodbridge press, the most spirited denouncement of the Stamp Act in the American Colonies in the form of a newspaper designated the "Constitutional Courant." This paper, which was sold on the streets of New York for one day, was suppressed by the authorities. The paper, however, was reprinted and distributed in Boston and Philadelphia. Parker died in Burlington but was buried in the Presbyterian Churchyard in Woodbridge.

BARRON LIBRARY

When Thomas Barron of New York City died in 1875, he remembered his native town by bequeathing to Dr. Ellis B. Freeman, the Rev. George C. Lucas, and Dr. John C. Barron of New York, the sum of \$50,000 in trust to be applied by them to the purchase of ground on which to erect a building as a "free public reading room and library" and to supply the same with books and other reading matter. He also authorized these men to make application to the State of New Jersey for an "Act of Incorporation," but this was not done until 1889.

The opening and dedication of the library were held September 11, 1877, at which time the deed for the land was delivered to the trustees as a donation from John C. Barron in a presentation speech made by that gentleman.

MISCELLANEOUS

The annual event hailed as "Salt Water Day" was ushered in during 1855. This day was also known as the "Harvest Joy Day" and the "Great Washing Time." Always held in the month of August on the third Saturday, it brought the farmers and their employees together at the water spots on the Raritan River and the Bay to indulge in salt water bathing. The origin of the custom is unknown but was probably instituted to provide a holiday for the farmers after the reaping of the grain harvest. The day was usually celebrated at the Perth Amboy and Florida Grove Beaches.

Florida Grove continued to operate as a resort and picnic grounds until the turn of the nineteenth century when it was abandoned to the clay and brick industry. Florida Grove Beach was located where the plant of the National Fire Proofing Company at Keasbey stands.

About 1875, Acker's Grove on Staten Island Sound was opened. It catered to picnics and fishermen. This establishment continued to operate long after the passing of Boynton Beach. It was a popular bathing spot for the younger set of Rahway and Woodbridge until it had to surrender to the encroachment of industry. Some years ago the site was acquired by the Royal Petroleum Company.

C. W. Boynton, who owned an extensive water front on the Jersey side of the Sound, made improvements to his grove and erected a number of bath houses. It was then designated as Boynton Beach and was said to have the best and safest bathing beach along the Sound at low water and equal to any other at high water. The popularity of this resort was far-reaching. For some years it provided for the annual visitation of thousands by rail and steamboat from New York and the northern cities of New Jersey. Boynton Beach, which also catered to the fishermen from the city, maintained a boat house on the grounds near the steamboat dock for their convenience until the pollution of the Sound drove the fish and fishermen to other quarters. This famous old resort, which boasted of one of the finest dancing pavilions in the State, was destroyed by fire on May 30, 1917, after forty-one years of honorable existence. In 1927 the site of the old beach was sold to the Shell Oil Company and is now covered with tanks.

